

Asbury Theological Seminary ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange

Syllabi

eCommons

1-1-2002

CO 621 Psychology of Religion

Tapiwa N. Mucherera

Follow this and additional works at: <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi>

Recommended Citation

Mucherera, Tapiwa N., "CO 621 Psychology of Religion" (2002). *Syllabi*. Book 1203.
<http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/1203>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the eCommons at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. For more information, please contact thad.horner@asburyseminary.edu.

Psychology of Religion
Tapiwa N. Mucherera, Ph.D.
Asbury Theological Seminary
Spring 2002

Office: SH413

Phone: 858-2289

E-mail: Tapiwa_Mucherera@asburyseminary.edu

Course Description:

This course is designed to explore topics in the psychology of religion with the goal of relating the findings the helping professions. The course is also designed to encourage thought about the psyche as it works in religious thought, feeling and behavior. One tool we will use to facilitate this kind of reflection is reading of some of the major approaches to the psychology of religion. Another is observation of religious practice. Another is a habit of asking questions--and following them up with questions. Questions are important because psychology, like most fields of study, is a process of inquiry. A seminar format allows for sharing results of student research on selected topics. A key goal is to consider the significance of the research findings for Christian ministry.

Everyone should come to class prepared to say what he or she sees as the main point of the reading.

- Everyone should attempt to understand the structure of the author's argument. Everyone should have a question or two about the readings.

All these contributions to the discussion should come with page numbers attached.

Course Objectives:

After having completed this course students will:

1. be able to think about how the psyche works in religious thought, feeling, and behavior.
2. Become familiar with the psychological methods and tools by which religion is studied.
3. Explore the interplay of religion and culture as it affects individuals.
4. Develop awareness of approaches to evaluating the effects of religion upon individuals' lives.

About the Readings:

This is a **seminar/ reading course** (assume a total of @ 1600-2000 pp. of assigned and collateral readings). Some classtime will be reserved to process/discuss textual reading and suggested readings, but the student will be expected to pursue reading in depth along lines of personal interest and topic chosen. Most textual reading will be directly related to class process. Specified readings are to be read before the assigned dates with a **one-page** response prepared before class sessions. Nine responses are expected starting on the Feb 19th 2002.

Required Texts:

David M. Wulff, Psychology of Religion John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

William James, Varieties of Religious Experience.

Spilka & McIntosh The Psychology of Religion: theoretical approaches. Westview Press, 1997.

Recommended Texts:

H. Newton Malony (ed) Psychology of Religion: personalities, problems and possibilities. Baker Book House, 1991. (On reserve).

3. Part of the course will be seminar sessions led by class members on topics selected from the following list:
 1. Conversion
 2. Sanctification
 3. Healing and Health (body/mind/spirit)
 4. Spiritfilleddness and Leadership (power)
 5. Tongue Speaking and Charismata (objective study)
 6. Faith
 7. Dividedness and Wholeness of the Self
 8. Listening to God--Knowing God's Will

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular attendance.
2. Write a thorough religious auto-biography (8-10 pages) centered on your own psycho-religious development. **Due March 28, 2002**
3. Complete textual and other assigned readings by specified dates. Responses to weekly reading assignments are to be presented in class each **Tuesday**.
4. Working with a small group, prepare and present a 75-minute seminar presentation on your selected topic. (to be presented in May).
5. Final Paper: Present a documented, 15-20-page research paper on any appropriate topic in the field of psychology of religion not later than **May 17th, 2002**. Submit topics for approval on **March 5th, 2002**.
6. Grades will be developed from class participation, reading responses, seminar presentation, and the research paper.

A "Course Calendar with Weekly Readings" for May will be modified based on the number of students in the course.

Seminar Assignments with Weekly Readings

Week 1

Feb 12 & 14

Religion and the value of individual experience: William James

Wulff, Psychology of Religion. 49-116. "James' Psychology of Religion and His Legacy," pp.472-505.

William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, Lectures I and 2.

Week 2

Feb 19 & 21

Typologies of Religious Orientation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic.

1. Allport, Gordon W., "The Religious Context of Prejudice" (**on reserve**)
2. Wulff, Psychology of Religion, "The Quest for Correlates of Religion," pp.219-237.
3. Gorsuch, Richard L., "Toward Motivational Theories of Intrinsic Religious Commitment," in Spilka and McIntosh.

Question: How does Allport develop an empirical question? How does he relate psychology to other ways of knowing? What do you think of the distinction Allport draws between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations?

Wulff, Psychology of Religion, pp.205-242 and pp.199-204. These pages are jam-packed. Leave plenty of time to read them.

Question: Which of the studies described seems to you to give the most insight into religion? Think about what aspect of religion it allows you to understand. How satisfying is this insight? Will it help you understand other aspects of religion? of the psyche?

Week 3

Feb 26 & 28

Religion as a Means of Dealing with Life:

Pargament, Kenneth I., and Crystal L. Park, "The Religion-Coping Connection," in Spilka and McIntosh, pp.43-53.

McIntosh, Daniel N., 'Religion-as-Schema, with Implications for the Relation Between Religion and Coping,' in Spilka and McIntosh, pp.171-183.

Wulff, Psychology of Religion pp.243 –257

Questions What are the main aspects of religious beliefs that help people to cope as per readings?

Week 4

March 5 & 7

Religion and Thought Processes:

1. Ozorak, Elizabeth Weiss, "In the Eye of the Beholder: A Social-Cognitive Model of Religious Belief," in Spilka and McIntosh, pp.194-203.
2. Proudfoot, Wayne, and Phillip R. Shaver, "Attribution Theory and the Psychology of Religion," in Spilka and McIntosh, pp.139-152.

Question: According to Proudfoot and Shaver, does the setting of an experience have any effect on how religious it seems? Think about this for our field experience.

Week 5

March 12 & 14

Religion and Mature Adulthood

Wulff, Psychology of Religion, pp.371-418, 555-557.

Question: What difference do social structures make to development, according to Erikson? When is religion most important to people in their lives? In what forms is religion important to people and at what ages, as Erikson sees it? Is development a concept which depends strictly on psychological investigation? How widely should a psychology of religion focus as it seeks variables to investigate? How can humanistic hunches help or hinder research?

Week 6

March 19 & 21

Religion and Judgments of Causes

Spilka, Bernard, Phillip R. Shaver, and Lee Kirkpatrick, "A General Attribution Theory for the Psychology of Religion," pp.153-170.

Questions: What reasons do the writers give for thinking that attribution theory will help the psychology of religion? What do Spilka, Shaver and Kirkpatrick add to the ideas of Proudfoot and Shaver? How could you use these ideas in a field study?

Week 7

March 26 & 28

Psychoanalytic Approaches to Religion:

Freud, Sigmund, The Future of an Illusion. Chapters IV-VII. (on reserve)

Question: What is your response to Freud's notion of religion as an illusion? How does it fit in the development of the personality, according to Freud?

Week 8

April 1-5

Reading Week

Week 9

April 9 & 11

Psychoanalytic Theory and Its Applications- Mystical Experiences

Wulff Psychology of Religion, pp.276-286; 309-319;

Ralph W. Hood, "The Empirical Study of Mysticism" in Spilka & McIntosh Psychology of Religion pp. 222ff

Question: Why is mystical experience important to psychological of religion?

Jung on Ritual as Transformation

Wulff, Psychology of Religion, pp 434-453.

Week 10

April 16 & 18

Attachment Theory and Psychology of Religion

Kirkpatrick, Lee A., "An Attachment-Theory Approach to the Psychology of Religion," pp.114-133 in Spilka and McIntosh.

Question: In what ways is attachment theory like psychoanalytically oriented theories? In what ways is it different?

Week 11

April 23 & 25

Cross-Cultural Challenges from Africa

Mbiti, John S., African Religions and Philosophy, Introduction, chapter 6 and chapter 17. Mbiti, John S., Introduction to African Religions, ch. 15, 16, 18, pp.197-201.

On reserve.

Bergin and Payne; (in Spilka & McIntosh) Proposed agenda for a Spiritual strategy in Personality and Psychotherapy. 54-70.

Questions: How do Bergin & Payne's ideas help you make sense of the African material? Do these ideas themselves make sense when you think about the African material?

Week 12

April 30 & May 2

"Conversion"

Seminar:

Reading: William James, Varieties, Lectures IX and X

Alternate: Maloney & Southard, Handbook of Religious Conversion (reserve) pp.159-177, 192-205, and 229-294.

Week 13**May 7 & 9**

"Sanctification"

Seminar:

Reading: William James, Varieties, Lectures XI-XIII

Week 14**May 14 & 16**

"Healing and Health"

Seminar:

Charisma and Tongue Speaking

Seminar

Week 15**Finals Week**

**** The professor reserves the right to modify the syllabus.**